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SUBJECT: EU APPROVES MILITARY TRAINING MISSION FOR SOMALI  
FORCES

REF: USEU BRUSSELS 1561

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Christopher Davis for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) On January 25, EU Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels approved an EU military mission to train Somali National Security Forces in Uganda. French and German contacts tell us the mission will begin in May. Operational level planning will continue under the supervision of EU Political and Security Committee Ambassadors, but no further approval is necessary at ministerial level.

¶2. (SBU) Reaching this agreement required intensive efforts last week to overcome UK reservations about the mission, according to a contact in the French Permanent Representation. UK concerns focused on the vetting, payment, and mentoring of Somali trainees (REF). Recognizing the importance of these issues, the EU's ministerial conclusions note the need for a "wider international effort" to vet, pay, and mentor trainees.

¶3. (SBU) The EU's ministerial conclusions declare that EU efforts should take place in close coordination with the U.S., Uganda, the Transitional Federal Government, the African Union, and the UN. On January 22, USEU circulated cleared non-paper points expressing the USG's willingness to partner with the EU in its training efforts. EU officials welcomed our willingness to engage and noted that our points came at an opportune time (Comment: Presumably because EU and Member State officials were engaged in last-minute work to allay the UK's concerns).

¶4. (C) Comment: Our willingness to consider a partnership seems to have helped clear the way for EU action. Over the last six months, USEU facilitated a series of working-level U.S.-EU exchanges on Somali forces' training, and Embassies Kampala and Nairobi also engaged EU fact-finding missions to the region. These consultations seem to have resulted in greater U.S. influence over the EU's internal planning and decision-making processes than is typically the case. We now have the opportunity further to influence the EU's operational level planning and help our European partners deploy trainers by May. End Comment.

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